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WAR FOOD ADMINISTRATION  
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THE CHALLENGE OF LEADERSHIP IN THE 4-H PROGRAM DURING PEACE OR WAR\*

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As we move closer to the certainty of victory over the evil forces of aggression, a grateful world stands amazed at the tremendous achievements in battle and production of the American people. Coming generations will give thanks in retrospect to American democracy for turning the tide of battle in favor of human freedom. Perhaps historians will attempt to isolate the factors that made for certain victory.

What history will define as these factors, I do not know, but I would like to suggest to historians at least the following:

1. Our huge natural and developed resources
  - (Factories
  - (Research laboratories
  - (Farms, with good methods
  - (Forests
  - (Mines
2. A free democratic spirit
  - (The home front felt and understood the meaning of human dignity.
  - (We were willing to sacrifice our most treasured possession in defense of that spirit.
3. A vast resource of youth
  - (High in energy-- in purpose
  - (With a high sense of decency and fair play.
4. An intelligent leadership, with the know-how.

We need not discuss these things in detail--that's not the purpose of this conference today. You know, as I know, how our schools and universities prepared our citizens in the fields of technology and science, how our factories expanded with unprecedented speed; how we won the battle of Normandy, and the battles of Saipan and other islands of the Pacific. You know how our churches have labored to bring a sense of justice--a touch of tolerance toward our fellow man to the hearts of all--to make the "Sermon on the Mount" not just a topic for an annual devotion but a set of ethical principles governing our daily behavior in order that we might live a "peace on earth."

We all know how truly this war concerns every single one of us at home. Sometimes, because of the frailties of human nature, some of us don't act as though we do understand this fact. However, in the programs that you are concerned with--food production, conservation, and service by youth--the record speaks for itself.

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\* A composite of talks presented at 3-day district 4-H Wartime Leader Training conferences in Oregon, Nevada, and Utah, February and March 1945.



For 3 years the American farmer has produced more than in the previous year, with less labor and not enough machinery. The American family, even though the best fed and clothed in the world, has learned to live under systems of controls and limitations. And because this is total war, with every boy and girl called on to do his full share, youth organizations, schools, and churches all quickly adjusted their programs. Wherever leadership was ready, youth also was ready and anxious to respond by doing its full share. Parents gave the go-ahead sign, and the community backed them up.

The record of our 4-H Club work in America is statistically an imposing one since Pearl Harbor:

- 400,000 acres of victory garden products grown.
- 33,000,000 chickens, ducks, turkeys raised.
- 300,000 dairy animals raised, owned, or cared for.
- 1,600,000 beef, hogs, and other livestock sent to market.
- 200,000 acres of oil crops produced.
- 47,000,000 quarts of products canned or frozen.

Added to the other 4-H achievements this represents food enough to feed a million fighters for a full year.

Part of the record of 1,700,000 4-H members and their wartime program was the \$140,000,000 in bonds bought and sold, and hundreds of tons of scrap metal, rubber, and paper collected. But it's your record also--as leaders. Just as the leadership in the armed services combines guns, men, valor, and know-how, into an effective winning machine, you, as leaders of youth, combined the raw materials--the youth, their energy, their enthusiasm, with your know-how and got these results.

But it is not only the record since Pearl Harbor that demonstrates the value of 4-H leadership. The 30 years of 4-H Club work, under voluntary leadership, as a part of the regular Extension program of the State colleges and U. S. Department of Agriculture has helped to prepare American agriculture for increased production, and American homes for practice in thrift and conservation demanded by war emergencies.

I wish we knew, for instance, how many high-producing herds of dairy animals stem from a purebred 4-H calf owned by some boy 10, 15, or 20 years ago, or how many flocks of sheep have been improved through good 4-H breeding stock, or how many farmers applied to their farms some principle of science learned from watching 4-H demonstrations, or how many are following practices of sanitation and disease control with poultry flocks because some boy or girl proved that it pays. We will never know how many acres of corn, potatoes, or strawberries are planted to better varieties introduced by 4-H'ers. I am confident, however, that every farm or home in America that had the benefits of a good, effective 4-H program was ready to expand and take the burdens of war in stride.

Yes, American agriculture was ready for increased production because science had provided the know-how, and 4-H Club work, as one branch of the Extension Service has helped provide the "show-how."



But that state of preparedness did not come overnight. It was part of an educational process that dated back at least to the year 1862. That's the year President Lincoln signed the Morrill Act, establishing the land-grant colleges, such as those at Logan, Corvallis, Reno, and Cedar City. That act said in effect, "Let's learn how the laws of the sciences such as physics, chemistry, and botany can be applied to agriculture."

By 1900 many colleges of agriculture and home economics were well under way, but the findings were a long way from being available to large numbers of rural people.

Interestingly enough, some progressive school people--superintendents, principals, and teachers--began to think of what their schools were teaching. They checked their work in relation to the homes from which their young pupils were coming. They seemed to come up with questions like "Why can't we teach young people things with which they are familiar?" Or, "Why can't we help them see the beauties, the opportunities, the romance of science and adventure right at home?" Or, "Why don't we help young people use the tools they have--reading, writing, arithmetic--to improve their homes and farms?"

And so began the corn clubs, the canning clubs, the cotton clubs. All of you know well the story of Seaman Knapp's work with the cotton clubs. We need not repeat that now. By 1914, Congress realized that stored up in the vaults, libraries, and literature of the agricultural colleges and experiment stations was a vast treasure of knowledge not available to the people to improve homemaking, make farming more efficient and rural life more attractive and satisfying.

So Congress passed the Smith-Lever Act, establishing the cooperative extension service. This act provided for work with boys and girls, now known as 4-H Club work. That's why we think of 1914 as one of the 4-H Club birthdays, although the idea is at least 14 years older.

Soon there followed, in an organized way, the development of emblems, the name the rituals, the democratic procedure, the extension of the principle of voluntary leadership, and diversified projects.

At the beginning of the First World War, the 4-H Club program was directed toward mobilizing youth for Victory, just as it has been in this war. I'm sure some of you remember the big job the club members did in the last war. You know what a big job youth is doing everywhere in this one.

But during the early periods of 4-H work, the emphasis was on trying to establish either (1) new ways of doing things on a farm or in a home so that adults would learn from them, or (2) the youth were asked to perform some needed service.

However, by about 1920 and more universally today, leaders realized that in these programs was something far greater and more important than simply a way of teaching.

Here, indeed, in 4-H Club work was a youth movement through which young people, by their participation in doing worth-while things better, could be assisted in developing strong moral fiber, strong character, and intelligent leadership.



And so, today, 175,000 voluntary 4-H Club leaders are using better pigs, sheep, and cattle, better clothing and canning techniques, to build better men and women for tomorrow!

And when the call for saving food at home went out, I wonder how many home-makers were inspired to can or quick-freeze from the example of the thousands of girls who had learned to apply the science of bacteriology to the preservation of food, or how many families adjusted to limited textiles because they took courage from girls who made much from little because it was "the style."

And again, here the leadership of men and women like yourselves, everywhere, giving time because they love youth and believe in them, is serving the nation for a cause larger than the daily tasks of performing them seem to represent. Yes, these things-- chickens, acres, canned goods-- can be measured and counted. Yes, we count these as accomplishments in 4-H work, as the armed services count the number of tanks captured or railroad yards destroyed, or roads blocked, or battle-ships sunk.

But you know and I know that we will all fall far short of the goal of 4-H work, if that is all 4-H should do. Yes, fall as short as will the Allies if their only goal is winning the war.

Just as the goal of democracy in this conflict is a far higher one-- "winning a just and durable peace"-- so also is the wartime and peacetime goal of the program of 4-H work a far more significant one-- "the building of young citizens better equipped to take their proper place in the world of tomorrow."

And only you leaders know that the job is not an easy one. You know too that this bigger objective is easily lost sight of, easily spoken of, hard to label, and elusive to measure. Sometimes, as we dash about to arrange for suitable meeting places, "needle" the members to carry on their meetings according to parliamentary procedure, see that records are kept, exhibits made, demonstrations given, contests entered; that parents understand the work, that proper subject matter is taught, that members have fun and happy times while doing good work, we may, in our anxiety to get the job done, forget our higher tasks and do some of the things that the member needs to do himself. The job is not easy. Sometimes we may feel that our efforts are not fully appreciated, or that the job is too hard. Personally, I like to take encouragement from the words of Phillips Brooks:

"Do not pray for easy lives. Pray to be stronger men! Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers. Pray for powers equal to your tasks. Then the doing of your tasks will not be miracles, but you shall be a miracle. Every day you shall wonder at yourself at the richness of life, which will come to you, by the grace of God."

And so, if in addition to being a way of teaching, 4-H Club work is a voluntary character building movement of and for youth, belonging to the community, it cannot--should not be poured through a mold. Here is indeed a program which forever should remain creative, arising out of the interests of youth and the needs of the home and community. It should satisfy the high hopes and aspirations of youth and include those disciplines needed to build youth for their higher tasks.



By and large we have kept 4-H that way. If, for instance, you look into one community, 4-H is one thing. Look into another and it's something else, even though the same basic principles run through the program everywhere. If you would come with me to 12 different States you would find programs like this:

State No. 1. Seeing-eye dog project. Boys raise dogs on a cost-plus basis, to be given to returning veterans who have lost their eyesight.

No. 2. Child-care aid program. Girls have learned to care for children properly, relieving mothers for war work.

No. 3. Marketing program. Clubs study different kinds of marketing methods; a delegate is chosen to take part in county training schools; delegates sent to a 3-day marketing school, inspecting warehouse, wholesale plants, docks, and terminal markets.

No. 4. Lamb feeding and marketing project. Boys buy 15 to 45 lambs, feed for 90 days, grade their own lambs, and sell according to market grades.

No. 5. Music and drama appreciation. Clubs study fine music, learn the costume of the period, make costumes for the part, come together for a State-wide presentation in the university stadium; 5,000 girls took part in The Bohemian Girl

No. 6. Discussion on current public issues. Members study topics like "What does the good neighborhood policy mean to me?" write a paper, give talks before service clubs, and finally on the radio.

No. 7. Rationing. In one State 4-H boys raised enough sugar beets to provide enough sugar, at present rationing allotments, for 67,000 families.

No. 8. Getting started in farming. This is an organized program designed to help boys become established in farming through partnership agreements with their dads.

No. 9. Learning democratic process. One State has a "model meetings" contest where by preparing to put on a good meeting, doing it, and observing others, the members learn good parliamentary procedure. Of course, every club uses democratic procedure.

No. 10. Conservation of wildlife. By conserving soil, planting trees, cover and feed for upland game, building fishponds, youth are reestablishing and protecting the States' natural resources.

No. 11. Health programs. In addition to learning principles of good nutrition, 4-H members take strength tests, follow good daily health habits, have physical examinations, and take part in State and national health contests.

No. 12. Dollar-dinner contest. Girls who have acquired needed background plan, budget, prepare, and serve a dinner to four guests for \$1. It's as popular as the dress review for the clothing girls.

Yes, 4-H is flexible, is capable of doing a full job for all youth between 10 and 21 years if we but have the imagination, the courage, and the intelligence to understand youth and let them do things.



And that idea has spread until today youth in England, Canada, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, China, Venezeula, Chile, Trinidad, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and Alaska, have a start toward a big program patterned after 4-H work but embodying their own heritage.

And it's because youth will live longest under the social order emerging from this conflict, that the job of youth leaders is such an important one in America. The 30 years' background and the experience of two wars should give us courage and confidence to move forward.

You are the ones who are helping youth realize that the world is waiting for them; you are the ones who are stimulating their eager hopes and young imaginations; you are the ones to encourage them to take their place now in the scheme of things. You are helping to provide the courage they will need as reality brings forth many disappointments. It is to you that youth look to represent them adequately at the council tables when plans for their world are laid.

And so as we look ahead, we realize that a few big truths stand out before us.

(1). The war is not yet won. Let me quote from Director M. L. Wilson in his National 4-H Week message to club members throughout the nation:

"Although we're making progress in the war, it is not yet won. The lines of lonely white crosses are growing longer every day. The hospitals equipped with beds and bandages you helped provide are filling up. The ambulances you bought with your war bonds of mercy are shuttling back and forth from front-line fire more often and with larger loads.

"More young men, many of whom will be your brothers, or your friends or neighbors, will be called to fill the growing need of the battle fronts. Most of the eggs, the vegetables, the grains, the fruit, and the meat produced last year will vanish in 1945. Food, like ammunition, is used up in high quantities. It vanishes not only on the offensives staged in the air, on the sea, and on the land, but also on the production fronts in the factories and forts right here at home. The letters written in '44 will not boost morale in '45. And the paper gathered and the scrap collected in '44 will not provide the materials needed in '46. The blood donated in '44 will not last through '45. No, what was done last year needs to be repeated this year in ever-increasing quantity.

"Now, let's see what's ahead for the 4-H year of 1945. We all are proud of the record made by you 4-H members in '44. This record gives noble assurance that you, the rural youth of America, are ready to move forward in full measure with the task ahead. You 4-H youth have learned that you can work better and accomplish more through teamwork. That's why every rural young man and young woman under 21 years of age should join a 4-H Club. The science of production can help make our efforts count for more. 4-H Club work means emphasis on producing and saving what is needed most by the best methods science and experience can provide."



So we need to recruit every boy and girl, particularly the 14- to 21-year olds, and help them address themselves to the tasks of their inherent ability, and repeat last year's performance all over again.

(2). The postwar period will bring a new set of problems and opportunities. Here again leadership of a high order will be called for.

The genius of 4-H work comes not from following a formula, going through certain rituals, performing accustomed exercises, or attending certain events. It comes rather from the proposition that youth are placed in a position to solve some phase of a larger problem facing them, their families, or community, and through doing something about it, develop strong moral fiber. That's one reason why youth needs to meet other youth in county, State and national events in order to acquire skill and knowledge of large affairs. The world tomorrow will truly need clear-headed, strong-hearted, healthy men and women, prepared and willing to work for peace as they have for war.

The virile, live club program of the future will be attacking problems of low farm income, of housing, poor health, of land tenure, of proper careers for youth, of more equal educational opportunities. The moral fiber of youth will be sorely tried as we reap the rewards of adult delinquency. By the same token, 4-H leaders will continue to show youth the way to opportunity and achievement of the best in life. May I list a few trends that are apparent on the horizon.

A. Programs will be geared more and more toward the improvement of the boy's or girl's

1. Health
2. Personal appearance and personality
3. Helping youth in choice of vocations

B. Programs will be based on mobilizing youth to face and to understand large problems according to their abilities. Then it will assist in preparing them to solve large issues by doing something about some part of it. It will include more:

1. Economics
2. Marketing
3. Farm management
4. Public policy making

C. Programs will use many more ways of teaching than the present project. And the project itself will be larger and broader. Each youth will increasingly set his or her own goal. He will do things that challenge him.

D. Programs will continue to be supported by the biggest, most influential and forward-looking men and women in each community, county and State, and in the Nation.

E. Programs will continue to be:

1. Voluntary
2. Democratically planned
3. Geared to full development of head, heart, hands and health



F. Volunteer leaders will want more training:

1. Understanding purpose and objectives
2. How to deal with youth
3. How to help youth learn
4. How to measure results

G. 4-H will operate in a "climate" of more services to youth--but 4-H will continue to be available to all youth regardless of other organizations with which they may be affiliated.

H. 4-H will continue to be a back-to-the-home movement.

I. More 14- to 21-year-olds will join and remain in the work if we do our job right.

J. Educational trips will become increasingly more important, as youth will want to understand the youth in other States and other lands.

(3). That it's not only the kind of job, but how leadership guides youth in doing it through 4-H Club work, that helps prepare the boy or girl for the world ahead. 4-H work will continue to supplement the work of the school, the church, and the home. How this is done, is in the hands of its leaders.

4-H leader training conferences should help all of you, not only to do a bigger and better war job, but to do it easier, and with greater assurance that your members will be better prepared for the opportunity of their maturity. I hope we can have many more conferences like this in these Western States and all counties.

And so, as we look forward to National 4-H Week March 3 to 11 to give impetus to your 1945 4-H wartime program, make plans for it and take part as a week of rededication, a new sense of importance may come to all of us, as we leaders of youth prepare to serve them better. Dr. C. B. Smith says it in these words:

"4-H Club work comes in contact with youth at the most impressionable period of their life. What 4-H Club leaders think, what 4-H Club leaders do, the standards of life they have, the ideals they strive for, will, in a large measure, be imparted to 4-H members and be carried with them throughout life wherever they go. That is why 4-H Club leaders will continue to fit themselves the better to guide and carry on their work. They realize their responsibility to youth and the nation."